

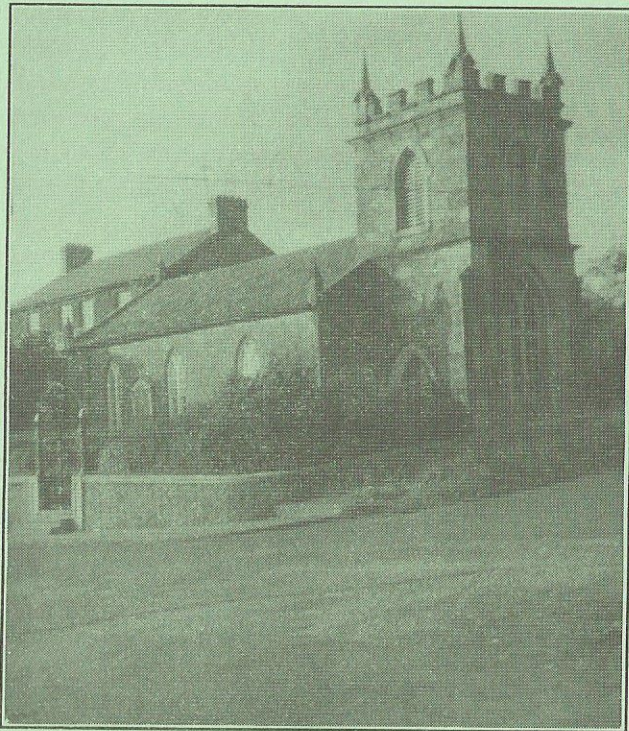
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DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY
Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Bulletin No. 8

February 1994



FERMOY

A NOTE FROM THE HONORARY EDITOR

On 15 July 1978 I drove into the town of Fermoy, parked my car and asked how I would get to the Presbyterian church. The directions I got were explicit and I had no trouble finding the building, which was only a pleasant walk from where I had stopped. I was impressed by the outside of the building but could not get access to the interior. There was no board (that I could see) to indicate who the minister was or where the caretaker lived. And I had no camera... A woman who happened to be passing as I stood there told me there was a service in the church every Sunday morning.

Three years were to elapse before I got a sight of the Fermoy edifice again. This time I had an old box camera in the car and I took the black-and-white photograph which you see on the cover of the bulletin. Now, thirteen years later, I have fulfilled my long-cherished ambition to write something about Fermoy and its Presbyterian congregation. I hope this article will be of some interest to readers in the Republic, in Northern Ireland and further afield.

My warm thanks to the Rev. John G Faris, minister of Cork and Aghada, for telling us in writing about the recent and present-day fortunes of the congregation, and to the Rev. Stephen Johnston of the Home Mission for informing us about his work in Fermoy and his hopes for the congregation's future.

I find it saddening that only five people – four ministers and one lady elder – have contributed congregational notes to this issue of the bulletin.

FERMOY: ITS PAST

I

When Charles Smith, MD, published his *Antient and present state of the county and city of Cork* in the mid-eighteenth century Fermoy was 'a small village, pleasantly seated on the Black-water, over which is a large stone bridge of 13 arches built ann. 1689 and cost[ing] £7,500...' We may forgive the Rev. Dr Beaufort for omitting to mention Fermoy in his *Memoir of a map of Ireland* (1792), for he says that 'to enumerate all the towns and principal villages of this extensive county (Cork) would exceed my bounds'. But it is altogether astonishing that William Seward, the itinerating attorney, should fail to notice the improvements that had begun in Fermoy four years before his *Topographia Hibernica* appeared in 1795. Seward's treatment of the place is even more cursory than that of Dr Smith, whose task was in any case to present a concise

city and county history.

By the time Samuel Lewis of *Topographical dictionary* fame wrote in 1837 Fermoy had grown into a market and post town of sufficient importance to merit over four columns in Lewis's work. The reason for the remarkable growth of Fermoy in the space of less than a century is explained by Lewis:

...Though the inhabitants had obtained letters patent for a market and fairs, this place, at the close of the last century, consisted of a common carrier's inn and a few mud cabins only; but in 1791 the late John Anderson, Esq., having purchased four-sixths of the manor, erected a commodious hotel and some good houses, and laid the foundations of its present prosperity. In 1797, Government wishing to form a military station in a central part of the south of Ireland, made overtures to the proprietor, who, foreseeing the advantages to be derived from such an establishment, made a free grant of a site for that purpose...

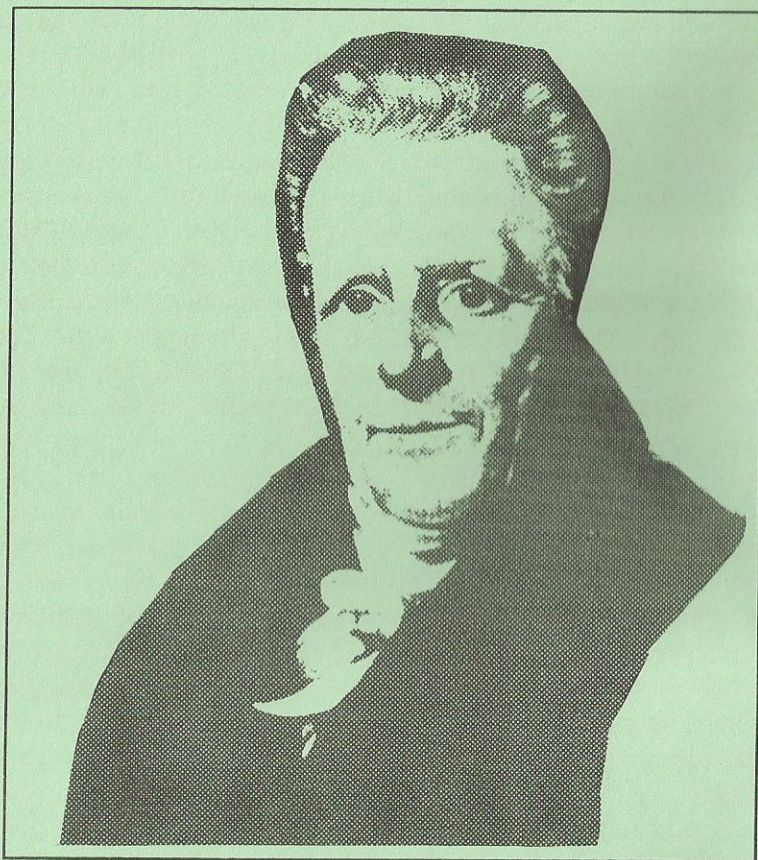
Of mediaeval Fermoy Lewis records that 'this place, which is now a grand military dépôt, is said to have originated in the foundation of a Cistercian abbey by the family of Roches, in 1170, which was known as the abbey of Our Lady de Castro Dei, and after its dissolution was granted by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Richard Grenville, Knt'. Doubtless the Gaelic name of the place, *Mainistir Fhear Maí* in present-day official spelling, derives from this twelfth-century Cistercian abbey. During the past two decades Niall Brunicardi has written and published much about the town, including a two-part local history and an essay on John Anderson.

Anderson was a Scot and a sketch of his life in the *Dictionary of national biography* describes him as the founder of Fermoy, adding that from very small beginnings he amassed a substantial fortune. Settling as an export merchant at Cork in 1780, 'he resolved to make a town of Fermoy and succeeded in constructing the handsomest country town in Ireland...' With Anderson's unstinted help it became an important garrison town and it would seem that some of the workers he brought over from his native Scotland were to form the nucleus of the town's Presbyterian congregation.

II

To his *Short account of the General Fund* (Dublin 1815) the Rev. James Armstrong appended a 'List of the Presbyterian settlements and the succession

of ministers in the Southern Association or Synod of Munster'. From this list we learn that the Rev. T D Hincks was then ministering at Fermoy. Thomas Dix Hincks (1767 - 1857) was born in Dublin, the son of an English government official who had recently come over from Chester. Edward Hincks died in 1772 and his widow, whose maiden-name was Dix, retained his post in the Dublin customs. Young Hincks first studied medicine and then divinity, coming to Cork from Hackney New College as assistant to the Rev. Samuel Perrott in 1790. He was ordained by the Southern Presbytery two years later. Meanwhile, in 1791, he opened a school in Cork which he continued till 1803 - the year of his election to the Royal Irish Academy, when he also became a salaried officer of the Royal Cork Institution, of which he was the projector.



Rev. T D Hincks

Hincks left Cork in 1815 to become tutor and, according to the *History of congregations* (1982), subsequently headmaster at the Fermoy Academy. In 1818 he formed a small Presbyterian congregation which met in Fermoy courthouse, which had been built in 1808. He soon became a recipient of the *Regium Donum*. The Rev. Alexander Gordon (who was afterwards head of Manchester Unitarian College) tells us in his article on Hincks in the *Dictionary of national biography* that 'his theology was Arian...'; so the Rev. Dr Clarke Irwin may not be far astray when he says in his history of the southern Church (1890) that 'his (Hincks's) removal probably caused the orthodox Presbyterians of the district to desire some one more evangelical'. Following the untimely death of the Rev. Professor William Neilson, DD, MRJA, in 1821 Hincks removed to the Belfast Academical Institution as classical headmaster, filling also from 1822 the chair of Hebrew and oriental languages in the collegiate department. He became LID (Glasgow) in 1834.

The next reference to Fermoy congregation that we meet with is in an exceedingly scarce pamphlet entitled *First report of the Dublin Presbyterian committee ...* (1823). It records that in 1822 a Synod of Ulster minister, the Rev. William Lyle of First Dunboe, went to Fermoy with a view to strengthening the Presbyterian settlement there. The Rev. Robert Stewart of Broughshane had previously spent a fortnight in the place, but Mr Lyle's visit was probably the lengthier one, for we find that his expenses amounted to twelve pounds, one shilling and sevenpence-halfpenny.

The joint committee of the Synods of Ulster and Munster for the revival and extension of the Presbyterian interest in the south and west reported:

Of Mr Lyle's mission to Fermoy the committee have not a very favourable result to communicate. It was supposed that the revival of the Presbyterian congregation in that town would have been a very easy matter, as Mr Hincks, their late pastor, had been so recently removed from it. The court-house of the town, which had been cheerfully granted for public worship during the whole time of his ministry, was refused on the application of Mr Lyle; so that, until some place for the accommodation of the congregation shall be provided, the efforts of the committee must be suspended in that town...

Towards the close of the same year a pathetic letter from the Presbyterians of the town was addressed to the committee:

To the Committee for conducting the Mission in the South and West

of Ireland.

Gentlemen: We, the Presbyterians of Fermoy, do hereby express our unfeigned thanks to your Committee for favouring us with the labours of the Rev. Messrs Stewart and Lyle. Since Mr Lyle came among us our numbers have rapidly increased. At first we could not calculate on more than five or six families; now we may safely reckon on twenty.

But we are sorry to state that opposition to us has increased in proportion to our increase. We have been under the necessity of leaving the Court-house, and as no convenient place could be obtained for us to assemble in we have therefore been deprived of the much-esteemed labours of Mr Lyle.

We are assured, however, that the opposition we have experienced will be useful to us. All we want in this place to constitute us a Congregation is a Meeting-house. We are unable of ourselves to raise so much money as would be necessary for this purpose. And as we have little reason to expect assistance from our neighbours we are rather involved in difficulties. We hope, however, that your Committee will take our state into their most serious consideration, and devise means whereby we may be enabled to worship the God of our Fathers according to the dictates of our own consciences.

Signed by our Committee,

D. MAGIN,

WILLIAM SMITH,

WILLIAM SHERIFFS.

December 8th 1822.

No further action appears to have been taken until the meeting of the Synod of Ulster in 1825. At that meeting a memorial was read from Presbyterian and other inhabitants of Kilworth and Fermoy, praying the Synod to erect them into a congregation. The memorial was accompanied by a letter from Lord Mountcashel, of Moore Park, Kilworth, whose name occurs a number of times in the Very Rev. Dr Finlay Holmes's biography of that great champion of orthodoxy and friend of landlords and aristocrats, the Rev. Henry Cooke. Mr Cooke was outgoing Moderator of Synod in that very year, 1825, and was destined to be the guest of Lord and Lady Mountcashel during the whole month of August 1826, while he was recuperating after 'the stormy scenes in which he had taken part during four years', as his early biographer says. This was of course a reference to the Arian controversy.

While staying at Moore Park Cooke attended a meeting of the Bible Society at Kilworth and later addressed another of the Society's meetings in Fermoy, where he met Mr Pope. This was the Rev. Richard T P Pope, a Protestant polemicist who was soon to be engaged in public debate in Dublin with the Rev. Thomas Maguire, DD, a Roman Catholic controversialist. We are not told where in Fermoy the Bible Society meeting was held; but following Lord Mountcashel's letter to the Moderator offering financial assistance towards the formal erection of a congregation 'the Synod granted the request and from this time supplies of preaching were regularly sent' (Irwin p.207). But oddly enough no meeting-house was built at that stage. Samuel Lewis (1837) mentions 'a place of worship for Wesleyan Methodists', but nowhere does he refer to a Presbyterian meeting-house in the town.

Events moved quickly once the redoubtable George Mathews became interested in Fermoy congregation. Mathews, though employed as a confidential clerk in Dublin Castle, was a man of desperate fortunes 'whose previous and subsequent history is more like a romance than truth', conceived as part of his grand design the idea of resuscitating extinct congregations and forming new ones in the south and west having orthodox ministers, but remaining nonsubscribing and in connection with the Munster Synod. 'He himself joined the Seceding body in Dublin and became an elder of Abbey Street congregation. He sent the Rev. Robert Quinn to Fermoy, obtained him Regium Donum and he became admitted as a member of the Munster Synod...' So wrote Dr William Frazer, FRCSI, MRJA, an elder of the Church and a trustee of the General Fund, in his manuscript history of that fund (1862).

III

Much of the subsequent history of Fermoy congregation may be followed in the pages of Dr Frazer's manuscript, which is preserved in the archive of the General Fund in Dublin; in the Rev. Dr Irwin's *History* (1890); in the *History of congregations* (1982); in the printed *Fasti* of the Rev. James McConnell et al. covering the period 1613 - 1840, and in the more recent *Fasti of the General Assembly* compiled by the Rev. Professor Barkley, which carries down to 1910 the printed record of ministers ordained or received into the ministry of the Church. Our narration of the congregation's story from 1837 onwards will therefore be no more than a mere sketch, based on the information contained in those works.

In September 1837 Robert Quinn, a native of Ballybay and a licentiate of Monaghan Secession Presbytery, was ordained at Fermoy. He had been

awarded the General Certificate at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution in 1835. Mr Quinn married in the year of his ordination a daughter of Thomas Henry, Annvale, Castleblayney. The year of erection of the meeting-house, 1839, may be seen over the door and on the front of the building is a plaque which reads: 'Erected/by the Presbyterian congregation of Fermoy/to the memory/of their late-lamented pastor/The Rev. Robert Quinn/who died 16 day of April 1841/aged 32 years'. Mr Quinn, who was killed by a runaway horse in Cork, was interred in Fermoy.

According to Dr Irwin the congregation was formally taken under the care of the Presbytery of Munster (orthodox, but remaining nonsubscribing) in 1841. On 28 September of that year William Kerr, a native of Randalstown, Co. Antrim, and a licentiate of Ballymena Presbytery, was ordained at Fermoy. He was, like his predecessor, an alumnus of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and he married the Rev. Robert Quinn's widow. Mr and Mrs Kerr appear to have had a daughter, for the Rev. George Magill of First Antrim is described as a son-in-law of the Rev. William Kerr. Yet Mr Magill is recorded as having married in 1861 a daughter of the Rev. R D Macky, Ballynure. Robena Quinn, a daughter of Mrs Kerr by her first husband, became the wife of the Rev. Robert Andrew Beattie of Convoy.

Mr Kerr no doubt attended the meeting of the Presbytery of Munster held in Fermoy on 24 May 1842, when two hymns were sung. 'Yet in 1851' writes Irwin, 'we find the same presbytery recommending the congregation of Fethard "to substitute the Psalms of David in the stead of the hymns at present in use".' In 1846 the congregation of Fermoy consisted of twenty families, so the figure was unchanged from 1822. The average attendance of communicants in 1846, which was just at the onset of the great famine, was thirty-two. The *Fasti* say that Mr Kerr resigned in 1850 and became an army chaplain. But in the *History of congregations* he is said to have *retired* in that year. Mr Kerr's death occurred on 12 July 1853 when he was only thirty-six years of age and no successor was appointed until the following year. However, the pulpit may have been supplied from the time of his demission or retirement in 1850 till then.

On 25 April 1854 the Presbytery of Cork, with which Fermoy had become connected in 1851, installed the Rev. Joseph Donaldson in the pastorate. A native of Tullyvallen where he was born on 21 December 1821, Mr Donaldson held the degree of MA from Glasgow University. He had also attended the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and Edinburgh University. Licensed by Monaghan Presbytery, he was ordained for Home Mission work at Foxford in

1849. The year before his installation in Fermoy he married a daughter of Robert Dickie, Rockdale, Co. Louth. Mr Donaldson, during whose pastorate Fermoy manse was built, laboured faithfully and zealously till his death on 1 December 1880. And Irwin says that he was much respected by all denominations in and around Fermoy.

The Rev. Joseph Donaldson's death was followed by a vacancy of nearly fifteen months. The congregation chose a former missionary who had been ordained for work in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) – the Rev. James King Clarke, who was installed on 22 February 1882. Mr Clarke, a native of Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, was licensed by Belfast Presbytery in 1844. He married in 1852 a daughter of Alexander Finlay, Collin, Co. Antrim. The Rev. Henry Lumsden Mitchell, MA, of Point de Galle, Ceylon, was their son-in-law. Mr Clarke died on 20 March 1891; but he must have become infirm and retired, for we find that the Rev. Joseph Livingstone Fraser Hurst had been installed at Fermoy two months earlier – on 25 November 1890.

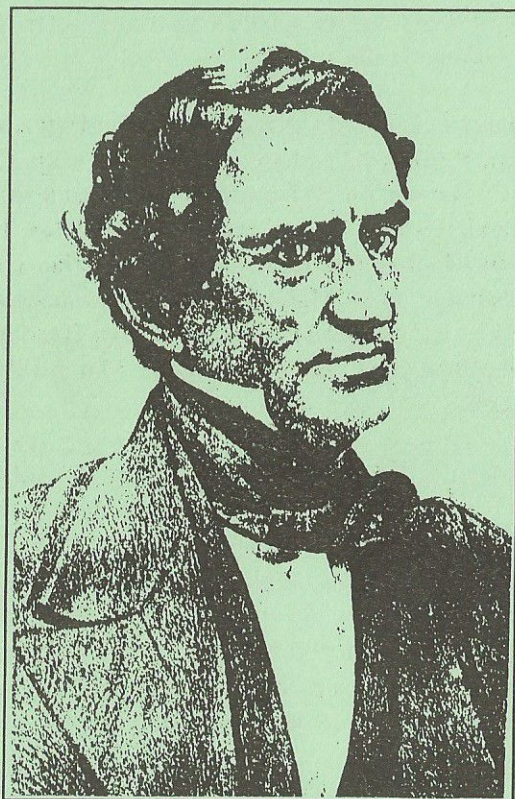
Mr Hurst, a graduate of the Royal University of Ireland who had grown up and been educated in the Reformed Presbyterian Church tradition, was ordained at Loughbrickland, Co. Down, on 19 December 1871 and he afterwards ministered in New Zealand. His wife was only daughter of the Rev. James Alexander Smyth, minister of Magherafelt Reformed Presbyterian congregation. Mr Hurst died in this charge on 28 March 1902 and was succeeded by the Rev. William Thomas Flack, MA (RUI), BD, a native of Bandon who had been licensed by Athlone Presbytery and ordained on 31 March 1898 for chaplaincy work on the Curragh.

Installed at Fermoy on 22 September 1903, Mr Flack's chaplaincy experience must have proved most useful in this garrison town. He again became a Chaplain to the Forces for almost the entire duration of the First World War. He appears to have retained his pulpit, however, for his resignation from Fermoy did not occur until 1 November 1919. It would seem that Mr Flack did not hold another ministerial charge until 28 April 1922, when he was installed in Third Ballynahinch. His stay was short. He resigned on 1 June 1923 and the date of his death is recorded as 19 September 1935.

On 1 November 1919 the Rev. William James Bruce Little, minister of Lismore, was installed in Fermoy, the two congregations now becoming a joint charge. A native of Cookstown, Mr Little was educated at Magee College, Derry, licensed by Tyrone Presbytery on 31 May 1887 and ordained at Maguiresbridge on 20 September following. He responded to the call from

Lismore and was installed there on 16 February 1893. Mr Little 'had the longest ministry of all', says the *History of congregations*. Retiring on 31 March 1940 he died on 5 March 1944.

The next minister of the joint charge was the Rev. Charles Patrick Alexander Logue, BA (TCD), the diamond jubilee of whose ordination was mentioned by the Rev. Charles McCurdy in the Ervey notes of our last issue (October 1993). Mr Logue, two of whose brothers entered the ministry, was licensed by Derry Presbytery and ordained at Killala on 20 June 1933. There he remained until called to Fermoy and Lismore, his installation taking place on 8 October 1941. He resigned when called to Kells and Ervey on 29 June 1948. Mr Logue subsequently ministered at Second Newtownhamilton and Creggan, and at Crossroads and Newtowncunningham, retiring in 1974.



George Mathews

With the installation of the Rev. James Craig on 15 December 1949 Fermoy and Lismore became, with Clonmel, a three-point charge. Mr Craig was licensed by Belfast Presbytery in 1917 and ordained at First Killyleagh, of which

congregation the Rev. Dr Henry Cooke was once pastor, on 18 December 1919. Accepting a call to Portstewart, he was installed there on 28 May 1926, demitting the charge on his being called to Fermoy, Lismore and Clonmel. Mr Craig was a brother of the Rev. Dr Robert Scott Craig of West Church, Ballymena. The Rev. James Craig retired on 30 April 1961 and died on 17 February 1973.

It appears from the *History of congregations* that Fermoy and Lismore, together with Cahir, became the responsibility of Mr James Hall (or Hill?) Flack when he was on 5 March 1967 ordained as assistant to the convener of the vacancy. We have been unable to discover whether he is related to Fermoy's earlier minister bearing the same surname. Mr Flack resigned on 2 June 1971 and was installed as minister of Athy and Carlow on the following day. He later became an art teacher, acting as occasional supply to various congregations.

... ..

Fermoy congregation was involved in the General Fund lawsuit of the 1840s, to the extent that its minister, the Rev. Robert Quinn, and its elders, George Mathews, William Sheriffs and John Black, initiated a suit in chancery against the fund's trustees. The full story of George Mathews, the pluralist elder whose malversation prior to his abscondence about the month of May 1850 was later the subject of a government inquiry, would require far more space than we can afford to give it here. Fermoy also featured earlier in the acrimonious newspaper correspondence of 1827 between the Rev. Henry Cooke and the Rev. James Armstrong, Clerk of the Synod of Munster, which Finlay Holmes in his biography of Cooke rightly describes as 'a theological slanging-match'. We copied the letters from microfilm in the National Library a number of years ago and may be able if God spares us to deal with these and with the Mathews saga at some time in the future.

Hon. Ed.

FERMOY: THE PRESENT...

On our journeys up and down the Cork - Dublin road our children look out for the 'big pencil', a sign in Fermoy pointing to the former Faber-Castell pencil factory. There is much else of interest in this elegant market town on the river Blackwater which has suffered much from redundancies. The Presbyterian church in Greenhill does not catch the eye as much as its bigger Church of Ireland near neighbour but it is a pleasant welcoming building.

No minister has lived there since 1971, since when it has been supplied by Revs William Mills and Brian Graeme-Cook, together with lay preachers including the late Joe Dixon (an elder in Trinity Cork) and Jack Giles, a Methodist lay preacher from Bandon. Jack, who is also involved in Cork Gideons, travels twice a month to take the 11.30 a.m. service. The congregation consists of Willy and Mary Dawson with their children George and Evelyn, and George and Pam Buttimer. The Dawsons are a farming family with deep roots in the congregation. The Buttimers, neighbours of theirs, joined some years ago. Hazel Baylor, principal of the Adair National School and a member of the Church of Ireland, is our very helpful organist. Other folk from the community attend occasionally and the church is beautifully decorated for our harvest service.

After Brian Graeme-Cook's death in 1991 Presbytery asked me to take over what must be the longest running vacancy of the smallest congregation in all of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. I remember Brian remarking, 'It is a flickering candle, but we must not allow it to go out.' It is good to hear that our Home Mission Development minister, Stephen Johnston, has been encouraged in running a bible study which has been attended by members of the congregation and others from the community. I am convinced that in the changes of Irish society there is going to be an increasing role for our congregations to offer scriptural faith and friendly fellowship with the stability and freedom that our doctrines and structures provide. Let Stephen take up the story...

John Faris

... AND THE FUTURE ...?

It was near the summer of 1993 when I was inducted into the Home Mission Development Ministry. This work associated me in a direct way with the Presbyterian Church in Fermoy. Part of my job was to see if any development work could be attempted in the area. In the autumn it was decided to hold a short series of Bible studies in a local hotel. These meetings were open for anyone to come to. They were advertised in Fermoy and John Corcoran (Irish Mission worker) and myself called at some doors simply to tell people that the Bible studies were on and to give them an invitation. This proved to be a useful and helpful exercise. When some people realised we were from the Presbyterian Church (and not the Jehovah's Witnesses!), they gave us a warm welcome.

The Bible studies themselves were encouraging and were attended by Presbyterian people and some others from the town who were interested in finding out more about the Word of God.

As regards the future, it is difficult to know what it holds for the little Presbyterian Fellowship in Fermoy. God obviously has a plan for the area and it should be our prayer that God will bless Fermoy and that God might use the Presbyterian Church to bring some of that blessing.

Stephen Johnston
23 December 1993

ABBEY

The *Abbey Magazine* continues to be sent to us faithfully on publication by its postal agent. We see by the latest issue to reach us that the congregation have launched an appeal to the public to support the restoration of the organ and also the clock faces. A special appeal letter and leaflet are available explaining the commitments which the congregation have made from their own resources and asking for contributions towards the balance of twenty-five thousand pounds.

Abbey Presbyterian Church, affectionately known to the populace as Findlater's Church, was so named after Alexander Findlater, JP, who erected at his own expense the splendid building in what was then Rutland Square and presented it to the congregation. The volume published in 1865 to mark the removal of the congregation of Mary's Abbey to Rutland Square is now a scarce item. We need hardly add that the church has been a landmark to Dubliners and visitors alike for the past one hundred and thirty years, almost. There are surely many outside the congregation and denomination who would be glad to give something towards the restoration fund.

AGHADA AND TRINITY CORK

The deaths have occurred of Emily Munro, a few months after her sister, and of Jim Gibson and Bertie McCarter. Jim came to Cork from Scotland in the 1920s and never lost his native accent. He ran a roofing business and Trinity as well as many churches of all kinds benefited from his expertise. He was an elder in Trinity and was involved in charitable work for St Luke's Home and the Victoria Hospital. Bertie came with his wife Annie from Co. Donegal to be nearer their daughters who live in different parts of Munster. Over the past five years they were regular attenders at Aghada, despite recurring illnesses. Our deepest sympathy to Annie and the family circle.

October was a busy month with the ordination to the eldership of Norman

Waugh. Rev. Denis Campbell, his minister in Bray, was acting moderator and spoke appreciatively afterwards. Our harvest preacher was Rev. David Campbell of the Bible Society in Belfast who was attending the General Assembly of the National Bible Society in Ireland in Cork.

In Trinity we have been looking at different ways to make the church building more suitable for our small numbers. A proposal to worship in the small hall for an experimental period has been deferred for the time being. We will appreciate your prayers for wisdom as to the way ahead.

The weekend before Christmas brought Steve Stockman back to us to take part in our Christmas party and in a 'Christmas Celebration', a gathering of evangelical believers from several different churches and fellowships. Steve spoke challengingly about the need to get involved with people as Jesus did.

John Faris

ARKLOW AND GREYSTONES

Hi Everyone! Hope you are all recovering from the Christmas festivities and still savouring the taste of the marvellous gift from our God in the Person of His Son!

Enthusiasm and faithfulness are the keynotes about Arklow. It is a reason for thanks that nearly everyone is at worship each Sunday and that most of the congregation was at Rathdrum Hospital for carol singing. Our ladies prepared a gift for every patient. Mark, Karl and Peter Harper were our musicians.

The noticeable point of our Sunday School presentation of the Nativity was the way our children are maturing. They all knew what they had to do and did it so well. This is backed up by our adults whose approach to worship is inspiring. In worship we have been greatly helped by Ann-Marie at the organ.

In both Congregations we were delighted by the ministry from Ken Gibson, Brian Colvin and Alison, Steve Stockman and Trevor Morrow. January is busy with United Services in Avoca, Arklow and Greystones. Both Congregations are planning outings together and it is wonderful to behold the interaction and support from each for the other.

Greystones Church echoed with carols led by the Armitage Shanks Memorial Silver Band, whose playing is always a real treat. The Table Tennis group

enjoyed an evening of competition and hospitality at St Patrick's. 50 members went to see the film 'Aladdin' and then for a meal – even the 'grown-up children' had a ball!

The Congregation was thrilled to receive from Richard and Harriet Whitney the gift of pulpit and lectern Bibles to match our pew Bibles. We are ever so grateful to them. The blessings and benefit through God's Word are inestimable and the challenge to make it relevant to our young people is particularly in our hearts at this time. May the Lord give us wisdom and vision!

THE WORK IS MIGHTY! THE LORD IS MIGHTIER! LET'S PRAISE HIM TOGETHER!

Jim Carson

CORRECTION

In the Arklow and Greystones notes of our last issue, which in the absence through illness of our minister your honorary editor contributed, we wished a former Greystones worshipper, Mrs Irene Gray, well in her new home in Dún Laoghaire.

In fact she is settled, happy and contented, in Tritonville Close, Sandymount.

Apologies, Irene!

DROGHEDA

Harvest Service

The Very Rev. Dr John Thompson, former Moderator of the General Assembly and retired professor of Union Theological College, was the special preacher at the annual harvest service on 17 October 1993. Other churches were well represented and were welcomed by the Rev. C McCurdy. The special soloist was Miss Jennifer Johnston, Hilltown, Co. Down. The church was attractively decorated for the occasion. Mr McCurdy thanked the decorators and the organist, Mrs A Ormiston, for the essential part they had played in the success of the celebrations.

Advent

Members of the congregation took part in the service on 19 December 1993 when the usual Christmas hymns were sung in God's praise. Those taking part were Wilma Ormiston and Donald Reid. Nicola Chambers sang a solo. The church was decorated, as usual, by the McIlreavy family. Thanks were expressed to all those who had participated in any way by the minister.

Congratulations

Jennifer Moffatt recently appeared on TV on Blackboard Jungle, when she took part in this popular contest between schools throughout Ireland. Jennifer is a pupil of Drogheda Grammer School.

ERVEY

Carol Service

Sunday 19 December was the day chosen for the annual carol service. The Sunday School pupils presented a short nativity play and sang two items, 'I'm Special' and 'Away in a Manger'. The organists were Mary and Susan Armstrong. Prayers were by Rachel Fraser, Andrew and Zara Archbold. The minister thanked the Sunday School teachers, the organist, Mrs O Gibson and all others who helped. Readers were Mrs Amanda Ramsay and Cyril Fraser.

United Service

The normal united service for Christian Unity week was held in the Presbyterian Church. The parishioners from St Ernan's attended and the sermon was preached by the rector, the Venerable Archdeacon Corrigan.

Charles McCurdy

DÚN LAOGHAIRE

Five members of the congregation were ordained to the eldership at a service held on Sunday 31 October 1993. One of these was James Malseed, who also happens to be the new convener of the congregation's Communications Group. The latest issue of the *News Letter*, announcing this appointment, says that Mr Malseed is 'young and dedicated'. We are informed that he is a member of the teaching profession. May we take the liberty of saying *Go raibh rath ort i do*

phost nua oinigh! (May success attend you in your new honorary appointment).

Among the many interesting features of the December/January *News Letter* is the second instalment of the history of the congregation. Question: why cannot our morning papers have editorials even half as good as the one in this issue of the *News Letter*?

KELLS, CORBOY AND MULLINGAR

Kells Harvest Service

The preacher at the annual harvest thanksgiving service on 3 October was Dr S W Ferris from Waringstown. The church was suitably decorated for the occasion by the members and drew much favourable comment. As usual members from other churches swelled the normal congregation. The collection was for the United Appeal target. The convener, the Rev. C McCurdy, welcomed all present and thanked the special preacher, the decorators and the congregational organist, Mrs M Hill. A cup of tea was served afterwards.

Corboy Harvest Service

The harvest service was celebrated with a goodly attendance drawn from other churches in the district. The church presented a most attractive picture and was greatly admired. The children of the Sunday School presented themselves in full force and led in praise. The convener, the Rev. C McCurdy, who preached thanked all who had contributed to the decorations, the musical part and the church organist, Mrs F Ferris. There was a very sumptuous tea provided for all present.

Marriage

22 October 1993 Jean Allen to George Washington.

Mullingar

We regret to have to record the death of Mrs Jean Troy.

Communion

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed in Kells, Corboy and

Mullingar on Sunday 10 October 1993. The preacher was the Rev. A L McAloney, BA, BD, DD, senior minister of Randalstown Old Congregation. Dr McAloney now resides in Warrenpoint, Co. Down.

Coffee Evening

A very successful coffee evening and bring-and-buy was held in the Iona Hall, Kells, on Friday 29 October 1993. All the stalls were well patronised and a good sum was raised for congregational funds. Thanks are expressed to all who worked so hard to make this event such a notable success.

Harvest Service

The Kells area united service was held in St Columba's church in the week of prayer for Christian Unity, in the month of January 1994. The rector, the Rev. William Ritchie, and the Rev. George Ferguson took part.

Charles McCurdy

SANDYMOUNT: CHRIST CHURCH

Our Harvest Services were held on Sunday 26 September, our new minister, the Rev. Dr Robin MacDermott, conducting both services.

We are pleased that in this the centenary year (1993) of the Girls' Brigade the 11th Company closely identified with our church has re-opened under the captaincy of Cathy Dooley. We wish her, her officers and members every success in the coming years. On Sunday 21 November a joint enrolment service with the 22nd Company of the Boys' Brigade was held: the Rev. Dr MacDermott conducted the service and the address was given by the Rev. Denis Campbell.

Our annual Sale of Work on 30 October realized a sum of over £2,270.00, and the cake-icing demonstration given by Mrs Margaret McDowell on 1 December, together with the sale of cakes and mince pies, gave a total of £350.00. Apart from the financial success of these occasions, both proved enjoyable social functions and we are greatly indebted to Mrs McDowell for giving her time and talents so generously.

On Sunday 19 December we held our service of Nine Lessons and Carols; on that morning the congregation laid gifts at the Christmas tree to be given to Dublin Central Mission.

On Monday 27 December Douglas and Margaret Colvin celebrated their Golden Wedding and on Sunday 26 December members of their family took part in readings of prayers at our morning service.

Marriage: We are pleased to announce the marriage of Mr Keiran Molloy and Miss Alison Jones.

<i>Deaths:</i>	23 October 1993	Mrs Lily Rippingale
	18 November	Mr Vivian Sweetman
	18 November	Mr Arthur Blackmore
	25 November	Miss Edie Hammond
	30 November	Mrs Ina McDonnell

We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved families.

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SCOTS' CENTRE

The Board of Social Witness has decided with regret to close the Scots' Centre as from 31 December 1993. It was becoming clear that despite the best efforts of Mrs Liz Hughes the centre was not being used at such a level as to justify its continuance in that form. We believe it to have been a valid and valiant experiment.

Some of the equipment has been given to Liz to encourage her plans to make resources available in the Tallaght area. The Clerk of Presbytery is taking charge of a store of resources relevant to social witness in the Republic.

We hope to tell you more in the next LINK-UP about new directions for the Southern Co-ordinating Committee.

John Faris